



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fort Smith
National Historic Site

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Fort Smith National Historic Site News Release

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For Immediate Release

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Fort Smith National Historic Site's 50th Anniversary! September 16th-18th

On September 13th 1961, Judge Parker's courthouse was donated by the city of Fort Smith to the National Park Service. President Kennedy accepted the deed and Lady Bird Johnson dedicated the site as a national park three years later. The park has been a part of the community now for 50 years and the staff would like to thank the city for all its support throughout the years.

Therefore, the park is hosting a free event that includes living history, music, primitive crafts, trial reenactments, and interpretive programs. On Friday, September 16th, the event will kick off at 6:00 p.m. with master storyteller, Roger Armstrong sharing tales of Fort Smith from its early days. At 7:00 p.m., local blues band Tyrannosaurus Chicken will entertain visitors with an exciting concert. Continuing on Saturday, the event will be open to the public at 10:00 a.m. Visitors are invited to tour the various historic encampments, vendors, artist, craftsmen, and children's programs. Two different trial reenactments will be offered in the historic courtroom. One will be from the book *True Grit* and the other will be an actual trial seen by Judge Isaac C. Parker. Historic Weapons programs will be offered with cannons, muskets, and rifles. Living historian, Doug Kidd will offer programs about the life of a Civil War doctor. At 3:00 pm, members of Osage Nation will present dances and music of their tribe. Ending the day, local Irish band, Cold Water Dog offer a concert for the public to enjoy in Pendergraft Park. The event will continue on Sunday at 10:00 a.m. with living history, children's programs, and trial reenactments.

Schedule of special events

Friday, September 16

Events at Ross Pendergraft Park

6:00 p. m Story Telling

7:00 p.m. Music by Tyrannosaurus Chicken

Saturday, September 17

Events at the Fort Smith National Historic Site

10:00 a.m. Florence Hamersley presentation

11:00 a.m. Artillery Demonstration

12:00 p.m. Courtroom Trial/ Civil War doctor's impression

1:00 p.m. Small Arms Demonstration

2:00 p.m. True Grit reenactment

3:00 p.m. Osage Dance Exhibition

4:00 p.m. Civil War doctor's impression

Events at Ross Pendergraft Park

6:00 p.m. Talk by NPS Park Ranger Staff

7:00 p.m. Music by Cold Water Dog

Sunday, September 18

Events at the Fort Smith National Historic Site

10:00 a.m. Civil War doctor's impression

11:00 a.m. Small Arms Demonstrations

12:00 p.m. Florence Hamersley presentation

1:00 p.m. Courtroom Trial

2:00 p.m. Artillery demonstration

3:00 p.m. True Grit reenactment

Ongoing programs, Saturday, September 17 and Sunday, September 18

Fur trapper encampment

Hide tanning

Rifle regiment encampment


Woodworking

Soap making

Civil War encampments

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Blacksmithing

Civil War medicine

Civil War cooking

Marshal's encampment

Chickasaw Lighthorse encampment

Antique gun display

Native American artists

Children's programs

Railroad exhibit at the Frisco Station

Fort Smith National Historic Site is located in downtown Fort Smith. To access the free parking lot from Garrison Avenue, turn south on 4th Street and west on Garland Avenue. For more information on the park, please call the park at 479-783-3961.